

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

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62

ACTION OES-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-10

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R 231446Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1770

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

UNCLAS PRETORIA 1470

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH, SF

SUBJ: ROUX REASSETS SA WILLING SHARE URANIUM ENRICHMENT

SECRETS

REF: (A) PRETORIA 1449

1. 'RAND DAILY MAIL OF 23 APRIL CARRIED ANNOUNCEMENT THAT UCOR CHARIRMAN, J.J.A. ROUX, HAD PARTIALLY LIFTED VEIL OF SECRECY AROUND SA'S URANIUM ENRICHMENT PROCESS DURNING SPEECH BEFORE EUROPEAN NUCLEAR CONFERENCE IN PARIS ON 22 APRIL. ACCORDING TO ARTICLE, HOWEVER, EXACT NATURE OF SEPARATING ELEMENT REMAINED CLASSIFIED. ROUX ALSO REITERATED SA'S OFT-STATED POSITION THAT GOVERNMENT WILLING SHARE ITS URANIUM ENRICHMENT TECHNOLOGY WITH FRIENDLY COUNTRIES AND TO ENGAGE IN LARGE SCALE ENRICHMENT VENTURE WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS. HE NOTED THAT A FEASIBILITY STUDY OF SA ENRICHMENT PROCESS HAD RECENTLY BEEN SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED AND UNCLASSIFIED

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THAT SAG WOULD PROBABLY DECIDE SOON ON ESTABLISHMENT OF LARGE

SCALE (5000 TONS SEPARATIVE WORK PER ANNUM) ENRICHMENT PLANT AT ESTIMATED COST R910 MILLION (US \$1,365 MILLION).

2. TEXT R D M ARTICLE FOLLOWS

QTE. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN URANIUM ENRICHMENT CORPORATION (UCOR), DR. A.J.A. ROUX, HAS PARTIALLY LIFTED THE VEIL SHROUDING SOUTH AFRICA'S UNIQUE URANIUM ENRICHMENT PROCESS.

ADDRESSING THE EUROPEAN NUCLEAR CONFERENCE IN PARIS YESTERDAY DR. ROUX RELEASED DETAILS OF THE PROCESS WHICH UCOR SCIENTISTS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPING OVER THE PAST 14 YEARS. TO DATE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT HAS COST R100-MILLION.

HE REVEALED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD PROBABLY DECIDE SOON ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LARGE-SCALE ENRICHMENT PLANT AT AN ESTIMATED COST OF R910 MILLION.

A STUDY OF THE FEASIBILITY OF THE PROCESS HAD RECENTLY BEEN SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED, HE SAID, AND IT HAD BEEN DECIDED TO REMOVE SOME OF THE SECRECY SURROUNDING THE PROCESS.

THE EXACT NATURE OF THE SEPARATING ELEMENT, HOWEVER, REMAINED CLASSIFIED, DR. ROUX SAID.

THE SECRECY WAS BASED ON CONSIDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICA'S COMPETITIVE POSITION IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET AND SOUTH AFRICA'S RESPONSIBILITY TO THE WORLD FOR THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION.

ONE OF THE CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO SOUTH AFRICA SHARING HER EXPERTISE AND TECHNOLOGY WAS THAT THEY WOULD BE USED ONLY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES.

"SOUTH AFRICA HAS ALWAYS BEEN WILLING TO SHARE ITS KNOWLEDGE OF URANIUM ENRICHMENT WITH FRIENDLY COUNTRIES AND IN PARTICULAR TO UNDERTAKE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LARGE-SCALE ENRICHMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA AS AN INTERNATIONAL VENTURE," HE SAID.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH INTERESTED FOREIGN PARTIES, WHICH IN SOME CASES WERE AT AN ADVSNCD STATE, WERE NOW UNDER WAY AND IT UNCLASSIFIED

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WAS EXPECTED THAT FINALITY WOULD BE REACHED DURING THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

"UCOR HAS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WILL DECIDE IN THE NEAR FUTURE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ENRICHMENT PLANT IN SOUTH AFRICA OF A 5,000 TONS PER ANNUM SEPARATIVE WORK CAPACITY." UNQTE.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPT. PASS ERDA-GERMANTOWN FOR ISA AND ERDA--

OAK RIDGE FOR S. LEVIN.
EDMONDSON

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NNN

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